

The Lost City

Published by Special Arrangement
—BY—
J. L. HORNIBROOK.
(Copyright, 1901, by J. L. Hornibrook.)

CHAPTER I.

There was silence in the room again—a deep, solemn, brooding silence—broken only by the long-drawn, restless moaning of the sick man.

Stricken down in the prime of life, his massive frame and powerful limbs as helpless as those of an infant, he lay like a log on that bed of pain. He moved slightly, turned his white face, moist with suffering, to the wall, and groaned.

He was still now—absolutely still. Not a movement, not a breath stirred, could be detected. It seemed as if the languor of the last sleep was stealing over him.

With his back to the bed, bending forward over the slowly-dying fire in gloomy thought, sat Paul Devine. His brows were knitted, his manner was absorbed, and his white, delicate fingers kept toying restlessly with the ends of his trim mustache as he gazed moodily into the heart of the smoldering embers.

Suddenly, as if he had drawn an inspiration therefrom, he raised his head and glanced round over his shoulder at the still form on the bed. The averted face, the absence of all movement, the helpless manner in which the brawny arms and huge hands lay upon the white coverlet, were strikingly suggestive of death.

As if fearing that the end had really come, Devine rose hastily, took the shaded lamp from the table and advanced to the bedside. Bending forward he peered anxiously into the face of the dying man. The shining moisture which glistened upon that pallid countenance, the leaden hollows under the eyes, and closed eyelids, impressed the beholder with that mysterious sense of awe which one always feels in the presence of the king of terrors.

Devine stretched out his hand, and laid it lightly upon the other's broad shoulder.

"Hutton," he said, as one who addresses a slumbering person, "Hutton, can you hear?"

Slowly the averted head came round, slowly the languid eyelids were raised, and the dull, glazed eyes, expressive of prolonged agony, looked up at the man bending over the bed. It was a look which might well have pierced even to a heart steeled to human suffering, so intense was its silent appeal.

But that face above remained unmoved. The features, delicate in shape as a woman's, the strongly marked eyebrows, the slight, silky mustache—above all, the cold, gray eyes, so pitiless, so calmly observant, seemed to constitute a sight which the dying man would willingly have shut out. And yet he was compelled to look; there was a power in that steady gaze fixed upon him which he was unable to resist.

For a few brief moments the two men regarded each other in silence. Brought thus into close contact, the contrast between them was striking; the one slim, refined, intellectual; the other a great, bearded giant, in whom the physical clearly predominated.

Devine was the first to break the painful silence.

"Hutton," he said, with slow emphasis, "your time is short. You are already at death's door."

"I know it."

"Do you still refuse to speak?"

"I do."

"Will you die with this thing on your mind? Will you carry the secret to the grave?"

"I will."

"You shall not."

They were rapped out, those three words, with a force and energy which seemed to startle and alarm the sufferer. The sharp, incisive tones, the stern resolve, evidently struck home. There was a shivering terror in the dying man's look, as if he was suddenly confronted by some new and unexpected danger, which he was powerless to avert.

"Leave me!" he pleaded, turning away his head again. "Let me die in peace!"

"Not till you have spoken," retorted the other, with fixed determination. "I have sworn to show you why this thing should be revealed to me; I have endeavored to persuade, to coax, to draw the information out of you by every means in my power. But you refused to speak; you maintained an obstinate, mulish silence in spite of all I could say. And now I tell you, Philip Hutton, that you must and shall speak."

I will drag the secret from you; I will—

Breaking off suddenly he stepped across quickly to the table, and replaced the lamp upon it. Then, as if firmly bent upon accomplishing his purpose regardless of the consequences, he returned to the bedside.

With folded arms, bent head, and contracted brows, he stood there—his eyes steadily fixed upon the sufferer. He seemed to bring all his faculties to bear upon the task of breaking down that obstinate reserve; the intense, concentrated force of will, the power which emanates from a mind that knows no wavering could almost be felt in the room. Hutton writhed under it, covered his face with one hand and raised the other on high, as if to ward off some impending danger.

"I will know the truth," came from Devine, in cold, merciless tones. "I am waiting here, speak!"

As if suddenly stricken down by some unseen power, the extended hand dropped on the bed. Hutton groaned, moved in anguish of mind that bodily pain, dragged himself further away, and seemed striving to shake off that power which had laid its hold upon him—that subtle, compelling influence which was fast entrancing his spirit.

"You rack—you torture me!" he moaned, raising his haggard eyes again to that cold, impassive face. "Have you no pity?"

"Speak!"

But the dying man's lips remained sealed. He raised his head helplessly from side to side, as if seeking to escape from that overpowering will-force which was mastering him.

Devine bent forward and watched the struggle with pitiless intensity. He saw that the other was gradually giving way, that resistance would soon be at an end. In another minute or so this man's mind would be open to him; and from its depths, where it had lain concealed, he would drag that secret.

The crisis came at last. One final effort to free himself from that magnetic power, and Hutton appeared to give in. With a deep breath he turned suddenly toward his tormentor.

"Be it so," he said, as if he had made up his mind to speak. You shall hear—you shall know all. Come closer."

At last! A gleam of triumph flashed from Devine's eyes, and his face betrayed an intense eagerness as he leaned forward over the bed. Absorbed in the thought of what was coming, he did not notice the strange look which Hutton bent upon him.

"Closer—closer still."

He lowered his head still more, until his ear was almost on a level with the other's lips. He waited—listened breathlessly for the first faltering words. In another moment—

"Ah!"

CHAPTER II.

It leaped from him, that "Ah!" like the cry of a man stricken to the heart. For suddenly, without warning of any sort, Hutton's arms shot up, and the next moment his long, bony fingers had closed con-

vulsively around Devine's throat. With a hoarse, worrying sound, almost like the snarl of a wild beast, he put one final strain upon those terrible muscles of his, in order to crush the life out of his tormenting fiend, who had goaded him beyond endurance.

As to Devine, the attack was so startling, so unexpected, such a sudden turning of the tables as it were, that it swept away every atom of fortitude, and left him limp, helpless, appalled. Then as he began to realize that the grasp of death was upon him a ghastly, ghastly thought came up his white face, and he gave vent to a stifled, choking scream, that ended in a gasp and a gurgle.

With starting eyeballs, his face mottled with lead patches, he tore furiously at those sinewy wrists. In vain he struggled, in vain attempted to release himself from that iron grip. He was held as in a vise; those firmly-locked fingers would never relax so long as life lasted.

There was something grim and terrible in that silent death-struggle. If anyone had glanced into the room, they might possibly have failed to realize the true significance of that scene at first sight. An occasional jerk or sway of the figure bending over the bed, a gasp or a rasping breath alone revealed the deadly nature of it.

With a last frantic effort to free himself, Devine collapsed. He lurched forward and fell prone across Hutton's body, lying there like a dead weight. Almost at the same moment, in accents of pained surprise, a cry came from the door.

"Philip!"

It was a woman's voice. Alarm, reproach, grief, were mingled in that single cry.

Falling so suddenly and sharply upon Hutton's ears, it seemed to quell the violence of his passion, to bring him to himself again. His hold relaxed, a sharp spasm passed through his frame, and he turned his wasted, bloodless face towards the door with an eager, longing look. In an instant the girl was at his side.

"Philip, what is the meaning of this?" she asked, glancing in alarm from one to the other.

His lips moved as if he sought to frame a reply, but nothing save a quick panting and gasping came from them. He was exhausted—prostrated. Now that the force and heat of his passion had died out, his strength was at a low ebb.

But he kept his eyes fixed upon that anxious face, as if striving to convey by a look what his tongue refused to utter. Tenderly she bent over him, and with gentle, soothing touch pushed back the matted hair from his damp forehead.

Like a man awakening from a dream, or rather from some hideous nightmare, Devine rose slowly. He clutched at his throat, as if he still felt the pressure of those terrible fingers, and drew away from the bed, and went reeling back against the wall. Propped up there, panting like a spent hound, he gazed around him with wild, rolling eyes. With one soft hand locked affectionately in her brother's huge palm, the girl faced round and confronted him. The look of scorn and contempt which she fixed upon him, the curl of her lip and her defiant attitude, struck far deeper to the soul of the man before her than any words could have done.

Raising her hand, she pointed authoritatively towards the door. "Go!" she said. And Devine, with hanging head, the livid finger marks still showing clearly upon his white throat, tottered from the room.

When he was gone the girl turned to the sufferer again. He lay with his eyes closed, and his massive chest rising and falling at lengthy intervals, as the labored breath came and went. Presently he opened his eyes with a start and looked up at her. The recent scene seemed to be still vividly present to his mind.

"Is he gone?" he asked, feebly.

"Yes, dear," she murmured, soothingly. "No more of him. He shall not trouble you again."

"You do not know him," he answered, with a gloomy shake of his head. "He is a fiend—a cruel, heartless fiend."

"Why does he come here so often?"

"To badger—to plague me. Nothing will turn him from his purpose; he is as cold and hard as steel. To-night he pressed me beyond endurance, and I tried to kill him!"

"Oh, Philip?"

"I did, Mary, and I tell you why. Give me something to drink, my girl; my throat is parched."

She brought him a cooling draught and supported his head while he gulped it down eagerly.

"That's better," he said, as he lay back again. "Now, listen, Mary, for my time is short."

"You know I have been more or less of a scapegrace, a ne'er-do-well, a regular rolling stone if ever there was one. I have drifted about the world like a cork on the sea—there's scarcely a corner of it that I haven't set foot in—until malaria fever laid me by the heels and I came back to England a wreck. You saw when you hunted me up here in this room by the docks."

"Well, in those wanderings of mine I lighted upon a secret—a strange secret—which I have never revealed to a human soul. This man Devine, whom I had the ill luck to fall in with on the voyage home, has moved heaven and earth to try and wring it out of me, but I refused to give it up. To you alone I will tell it."

He raised one of his great arms, placed it around her neck and drew her head down to his. In that position, and scarcely speaking above a whisper, he unfolded her his story.

Mary sat with him the greater part of the evening, for somehow, in his great helplessness, he seemed to cling to her. At times he dozed, only to wake with a start and an inarticulate exclamation. But the frown vanished from his brow and he heaved a deep sigh of contentment when his eyes rested upon her.

At last she rose, smoothed the rumpled bedclothes, kissed him on the moist forehead and moved towards the door. Just as she reached it she glanced back at him with a smile. His eyes were following her, and the last words he uttered—the last she was destined to hear from him on earth—were

"The scroll! Don't forget the scroll!"

CHAPTER III.

Alexio! A vast burning plain, where that curious miasma of dead danced and quivered within a few feet of the parched ground, where the intense glare scorched the eyes, and the sky overhead was like a glowing vault.

Away in front, a good distance off yet, there was a welcome break in the monotony of this dreary waste. Off there, the ground swelled upwards from the plain, rising in a long and gradual incline, a mile or two in extent. Winding up it like a thread was a mule track—it could scarcely be called a road—leading to the regions in the far interior; those strange, unknown regions where the ancient Aztec and Toltec races once flourished, and where they performed their mystic rites to the gods of the air.

The sun had gone down, and the scorching heat of the day was over, when the lit-

tle company of jaded travelers reached the summit of this long incline, where they purposed camping for the night.

They were a singing trio, this little band who were pushing on towards the great unknown that lay beyond. At the head of such an expedition one would naturally expect to find a bronzed and bearded explorer, insured to his wealth and power. But in this case the leader was a girl—an English girl!

She was standing apart on the high ground here, apparently lost in contemplating the prospect before her. And what a prospect it was! The dreary, barren plain had come to an end; and away in front, in panoramic display, stretched a beautiful, wooded country—a country of hills and dales of sun and shade, of flowers and fruit, of the soft, warm, hazy atmosphere of a mountain range.

The blue haze of evening was over all; that mystic haze which supervenes for a brief space in tropical climes after the great heat of the day. It seemed to lend a strange, visionary enchantment to the scene to transform, to spiritualize it. Under the spell, the purple peaks in the distance looked like the minarets of some great temple raised to strange gods.

At the girl's feet, stretched across the path, was a huge English mastiff, a great, slobbering, faithful brute, with the heart of a lion. His massive head was reclining upon his outstretched paws; if he raised it at all, it was only to turn bloodshot eyes upon the girl, as if to assure himself that all was well with her. The lights and shades, the glorious panorama in front, were nothing to him. He was there to look after his mistress—that was all.

Of the two men who constituted the young lady's companions—or, more properly speaking, attendants—one had come out with her from England. His name was Robert Blake, a big, muscular, Irishman, very ready with the heavy fists of his fists, when he was roused, all the chivalrous instincts of his race lay in that honest heart of his. He was devoted to his mistress, having known her from a child, and holding a long record of faithful service in her family. With such staunch champions at her side, Blake and the mastiff—well, the man who offered to molest her might just as well have sought some readier form of suicide.

The remaining member of the party counted for little. He was a half caste, Pedro by name, whose business it was to look after the mules—cranky, vicious brutes, that monopolized all his time.

Mary Hutton—for it was she—stood watching the strangely absorbing scene before her, the dusk of the evening, the view, even then she did not turn away. Her thoughts were ever on ahead, straining towards the region beyond that range of hills in the distance. They never turned back; what lay behind was done with; that which was yet to come alone occupied her mind.

And yet it might have been well if her attention had not been so entirely fixed upon the goal in view. It might have been well if she, or even Blake, had noticed that thin wreath of smoke which rose right after night away on the skyline behind them, or caught a glimpse of the two dark moving specks, scarcely discernible at the far end of the horizon, ever following in their wake.

Blake, who had been busy over the fire with kettles and pots, had just finished his preparations for supper when Mary Hutton strolled up, followed by the mastiff. She seated herself silently on one of the mule bales, with the dog at her feet, and commenced to eat.

When the meal was over she took out a curious-looking scroll, composed of some substance resembling parchment, and, holding it down to the firelight, brooded over it long and earnestly. One side was covered with strange and unknown characters; on the other a rough chart or map had been scrawled.

At the opposite side of the fire, the light beating upon his face, she saw the girl, who was deep in thought; so absorbed, indeed, that he was blissfully unconscious of the fact that his pipe had gone out. The intense, brooding silence was only broken by the sputtering of the green wood or the regular breathing of Pedro, the mastiff, who was sleeping peacefully at her feet.

"Two days more," continued the girl, thoughtfully down into the fire. "Only two days, and then—"

She broke off suddenly, and glancing across at her silent companion, added: "We haven't much further to go, Robert."

"Yes, miss," he answered, absently.

"It was some time ago that dreadful plain lay there," she went on, gazing round into the black void behind them. "That my brother Philip fell in with the dying Englishman who told him the story, and gave him this scroll. Philip himself was too ill; poor fellow, to push further on just then; it was as much as he could do to reach the nearest town alive. He thought that a voyage home might save him, and was full of the idea of coming back here when he had regained his strength. But it was not to be. Poor Philip!"

"There was someone who tried to get the secret out of him, wasn't there, miss?" asked Blake, waking up.

"There was, a man called Devine, or Devine, or something like that. He gave my poor brother no peace. Ever at the very last, when Philip lay at death's door, and completely at his mercy, he sought to overcome him by hypnotism, or something of that kind."

"The rascal!" muttered Blake through his clenched teeth.

"That's just what he was, and would undoubtedly have strangled him if I had not come in just then. I saw no more of the man after that. But, do you know, Robert," she added thoughtfully, "I have sometimes wondered whether he was merely keeping in the background, and watching me from a distance, suspecting, perhaps, that my brother had told me all that was in his mind before he died. He may have followed us secretly from England; he may even now be on our track."

"Don't let that worry you, miss," replied Blake, as he rose and shook the ashes out of his pipe. "If he ever comes within reach of me, he may find that the job which Mr. Philip undertook won't be left unfinished a second time."

Two days later they arrived at the foot of the mountain range, which they had seen from a distance, and pitched their camp on the shelving ground at the base of the nearest hill. It was a wild, romantic spot. Above them, in all their solitary grandeur, towered the rocky heights, whose crevices and gorges seemed to lead up to the very heavens. And here, tucked away somewhere in this mountain range, was the place they sought, the goal which they had come so far to reach.

Early next morning they commenced the ascent, winding their way up through a cleft between two steep hills. By noon they had reached the summit of the ridge in front; and here the girl, who had pushed ahead, drew up with a cry that brought Blake quickly to her side.

Before them, some few miles away, rose another lofty peak, the three hills forming a sort of gigantic triangle. In the center was a vast, saucer-shaped hollow, so regular in outline, and so perfectly level, as if it had been fashioned by the Titans of old.

The surface of this hollow presented a singular appearance. It was broken and uneven; sunken here, bulging up there, as level as a croquet-ground yonder. Huge granite blocks, columns snapped off short

at base, and fallen obelisks were lying about like wreckage upon the sea. At wide intervals one of these great monoliths was still to be seen in an upright position, standing erect amidst the general ruin like some ghastly sentinel keeping watch and ward over the dead. They stood so far apart, and the area between them was so immense, that the eye in the distance looked dwarfed in comparison with others near at hand.

"What is it, miss?" asked Blake, in a subdued, almost awed, voice. "What place is it, in the name of all that's wonderful?"

"The lost city of the Aztecs!" she replied. "A city of the dead!"

"You don't say so, miss!" exclaimed her companion, to whom, however, the explanation had conveyed no very clear or tangible idea.

"There has long been a tradition that such a city existed in the middle ages, when the Aztecs were at the height of their power," she went on. "Years before Columbus landed among them, the Aztecs, and for generations afterwards, was supposed to be a land of untutored savages, a great race flourished here, a people whose cities vied with those of the East. This was one of their chief towns. The site of it has long been lost, and, indeed, many antiquarians believed that the story concerning it was a mere legend. But my brother found out that it was no such thing. He intended organizing an expedition with a view to exploring it, but died on his way down to the coast."

"It would be worth exploring, too, I dare say," miss," remarked Blake, glancing across at her with growing interest. "It looks the sort of place where those ancient ornaments and queer old bowls you see in museums are found. I shouldn't be surprised if there was a fine haul to be made by rummaging about."

"Ah! you will soon be able to judge of that," she said, with a laugh. "Come!"

They picked their way on foot through the crumbling debris, following down the center of the hollow, the jagged stumps of a number of columns caught their eye, and towards this spot they directed their steps. On reaching it, Miss Hutton proceeded to examine the ruin with all the ardor of an explorer.

"This must have been a temple, I fancy," she said. "Ah! here is a flight of stone steps, leading down into some subterranean chamber. Let us see what there is below."

She descended the steps, followed by Blake and the dog, Pedro remaining in the background with the mules. Strong-minded, fearless as she was, her heart beat with a sort of nameless awe as she ventured down the steps of the sunlit, down into this sanctuary of dead ages.

On reaching the bottom they found themselves in a huge, circular vault, from which four lateral passages branched off. In the center stood a raised structure, closely resembling an altar, which seemed to be in a wonderful state of preservation.

Though the light which filtered down from above was feeble enough, it sufficed to reveal the full extent of this singular underground chamber. As they proceeded to make a round of it, Blake, who had stepped up close to the side, uttered an exclamation of startled wonder.

"Look, miss, look!" he said, pointing to a little niche in the wall.

There, in that recess, was a carved image of an idol, apparently some six inches in height. In its hand was a wand, or sceptre, the tip of which consisted of an enormous emerald, while above its head the niche was draped with chains of curious filigree work.

"Ah, yes," said the girl, coming across to his side. "You will find many such nooks as this, Robert, unless I am greatly mistaken. I should not be surprised if the wall all the way around was lined with them. Well, you see we were not long in discovering the haul you spoke of, and must set about removing it at once."

Blake, who required no second bidding, stuffed the idol unceremoniously into his capacious pocket, the chains quickly disappearing in the same manner. Further on they discovered a similar recess, to which he immediately turned his attention.

He was in the act of despoiling it of its contents, when his hand was arrested by a piercing shriek which rang out somewhere overhead. The next minute the opening leading to the vault was darkened by a shadow, and two men came clattering down the stone steps.

One glance at the foremost seemed to carry Mary Hutton back with a rush to that night when she had witnessed the terrible struggle in her brother's room. It was Paul Devine!

CHAPTER IV.

Blake, who had grabbed the mastiff, and was holding him back by main force, looked a question at his mistress. A nod of her head, and the dog would have been loosed. Devine saw the look, and was quick to understand its meaning.

"Keep that brute back!" he cried, producing a revolver. "I'll make short work of him. So, Miss Hutton," he went on, turning to the girl, "you see—"

He stopped short; something in her face checked the words on his lips. She was not heeding him—not even looking at him. Her eyes were fixed in a wild stare at something in the background—something close behind him.

He whisked round sharply, but as he did so a most appalling yell rang through the vault, and out from one of the passages poured a shrieking, jabbering mob. They were Indians—awful, repulsive-looking fellows, clad in the most part in long robes, like priests' vestments. In an instant they had surrounded Devine and his companion and overpowered them, despite their struggles.

Blake loosed the dog and sprang in front of Miss Hutton.

"Up the steps, miss," he shouted, as the Indians rushed upon them, like so many yelling devils. "Quick! For heaven's sake!"

She darted in that direction, but at the same moment one of the savages bounded forward to intercept her. He had almost reached her—his hand was stretched out to seize her—when, with a savage growl, the mastiff was upon him. Down they went with a crash, the man and the dog, writhing and struggling together in the dust. But it was not for long that they were a rush to the spot, and half a dozen long knives were buried in the faithful creature's body.

Blake, whose mighty fists had been going like sledge hammers, doing terrible execution among the swarthy crew that pressed upon him, took a quick glance over his shoulder. Seeing that his mistress had made good her escape, he fought his way back, step by step, to the foot of the stairs; then, as the yelling crowd hung back for a moment, he turned and darted up to the top.

There he paused and faced round again. A glance had shown him that Pedro was hurt—it was his shriek which they had heard, and that same cry had probably brought the Indians from their lair. They afterwards learned that the two men, Devine and his companion, had stolen upon him unawares, and one of them had struck him down just as he became aware of their presence.

Mary Hutton was assisting the poor fellow into the saddle. Having done so, she mounted herself, and away they went across the hollow.

Blake still held the steps. Below him, down there in the gloom, he could see the swarthy faces, the gleaming savage eyes of



TO DENVER, COLORADO SPRINGS, PUEBLO—ROUND TRIP.

DATES: JULY 1 to 9, inclusive; SEPTEMBER 1 to 10, inclusive.
RATES: From St. Louis, \$21.00. From Chicago, \$25.00.
Good until OCTOBER 31.

TO SALT LAKE CITY, OGDEN, UTAH, \$15.00 higher; same dates of sale and limits.

ALL SUMMER EXCURSIONS—VERY LOW.

TO DENVER, COLORADO SPRINGS, PUEBLO, GLENWOOD SPRINGS, SALT LAKE, OGDEN.
DATES: Every day from June 18 to June 30, inclusive; every day from July 10 to August 31, inclusive.

RATES: One fare plus \$2.00 for the round trip; limits, thirty days.

SPECIAL EXCURSIONS.

To above Colorado and Utah destinations, ONE FARE PLUS \$2.00 for the round trip, but with limits OCTOBER 31, INSTEAD OF THIRTY DAYS, on following dates:

DATES: June 18 and 25; July 16, 23, 30; August 6, 13, 20, 27.
For details of these various excursion rates and for illustrated matter descriptive of Colorado, do us the favor to apply to your nearest ticket agent, or write
W. N. HAW, D. P. A., Cincinnati, O.
L. W. WAKELEY, G. P. A., St. Louis, Mo.

his enemies. But none, not even the boldest of them, dared venture within range of those terrible fists again.

Not until his two companions were clear of the hollow did he quit his post. Then he made a bolt for his horse, sprang into the saddle and dashed away after them. The sumpter mules were left behind; if they escaped with their lives they might consider themselves fortunate.

The Indians at first made no attempt at pursuit, though the horses of Devine and his companion, as well as the mules, were standing ready for them. But just as Blake caught up to the two others, who were waiting for him at the edge of the hollow, a hideous clamor, a chorus of fiendish yells came across them from the temple.

"Ah!" cried the girl, with a shudder, "they are killing those two unfortunate men. It is awful!"

"No, miss," replied Blake, glancing back towards the spot. "I don't think that's it. Look! The whole crew are tumbling up and making for the mules. They're coming after us. We'll have to show them a clean pair of heels, and be mighty quick about it."

"It is the idol!" she cried, suddenly. "They have just discovered their loss and will follow us to the ends of the earth in order to recover it. Throw it away, Robert!"

But Blake was little disposed to comply. It took some pressure on Miss Hutton's part to induce him to discard the booty. Before doing so, however, he slyly wrenched off the magnificent emerald which formed the tip of the scepter and stowed it away in his pocket. Then they started off and clattered down the cleft between the hills at breakneck speed.

For two or three days they pushed rapidly on until they had left the hollow in the hills far behind, and were on the desolate plain once more. Here, where it became evident that they were not followed, Miss Hutton began to breathe freely again. Whether the Indians had recovered their cherished idol, and relinquished the pursuit, she was never able to tell.

That night, when they had camped, she remained for a long time plunged in profound and gloomy thought. "I cannot help thinking," she said, at length, glancing across at Blake, "of the awful fate which must have awaited those two unfortunate men whom we left in the hands of the Indians."

"What do you think happened to them, Miss?" he asked.

"Well," she replied, "it is evident to me that the heathenish religion of the ancient Aztecs, with all its barbarous rites, is still practiced in the ruins of that temple. Those Indians were priests, who, with their attendants, probably live in underground cells, like some monks of the present day. And," she added, with a shudder, "in olden times they were wont to appease the gods of death, of disease and of diabolical human sacrifices. What if it should be so still!"

There was silence. Blake did not answer. Even he felt a cold shudder run through him when he thought of those two helpless captives.

Whatever may have been their fate, Devine and his companion were never heard of afterwards.

That magnificent emerald which Miss Hutton sometimes wears has aroused considerable curiosity among her friends. More than once she has declined to relate its history, or explain how it fell into her hands. Her experiences in the lost city of the Aztecs, strange as they had been, were not such as she cared to dwell upon.